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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food & Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Ln., Rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

To whom it may concern:

I read the proposal on the labeling debate of irradiated foods and have several thoughts on the issue. I feel that for those individuals who understand irradiation, the current information label and radura logo are sufficient in showing that the product has been decontaminated by irradiation. However, for the lay individual with no knowledge of irradiation, the label needs a more thorough explanation.

I believe the current statement, if left intact, will unintentionally alarm most consumers. The idea that a product one is thinking of purchasing to consume, or feed one's children, is "treated by irradiation," may in fact dissuade the sale of the item. People unfamiliar with the statement may see it as a warning, rather than a benefit, and therefore not buy the product. For instance, when I asked several shoppers, with no knowledge on irradiation, if they would buy a product that had the statement "treated by irradiation," they all replied "no." Once I explained what irradiation meant; however, they all changed their votes. Similarly, even if the consumer knows that food's irradiated to kill pathogenic bacteria, the process itself must also be fully understood so it is not seen as dangerous or as making food radioactive.

I feel that a statement is necessary, however, because once the process is understood consumers may seek out irradiated items due to their benefits. To gain this benefit, while avoiding the possibility of frightening consumers, the statement should be geared toward making the process of irradiation clear to the consumer, explaining its benefits, and not leaving the consumer confused and possibly believing irradiation is a negative issue.

As consumers familiarize themselves with irradiation, this statement could eventually be withdrawn, and the product could be left solely with the radura logo. However, until then a more positive-oriented statement with the logo would be beneficial.

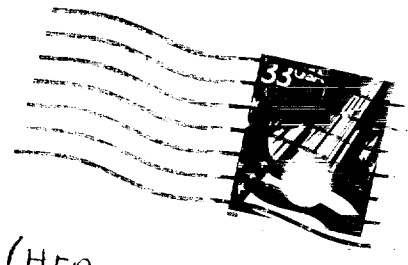
Sincerely,

  
Julie Strawhorn

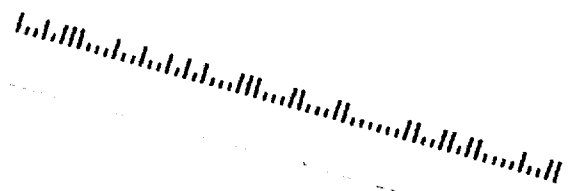
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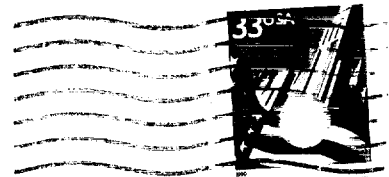
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